

Utility Billing Procedures - Customer Handout

Utility Office Location: 101 E. Kansas Street, Liberty, Missouri

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

Turn on/Turn off hours of operation 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

City billing staff phone number - 816-439-4460

Republic Services phone number - 816-254-1470

Deposit requirement at time of establishing new service - \$150

Deposit requirement if water service is turnoff for non-payment of the utility bill - \$150

Setting Up Service - Homeowners/Business Owners can either call or come into the office to get service set up. They will be required to provide their social security number, date of birth, place of employment and two phone numbers.

Residential renters must come into the office with their lease and a primary form of identification (see below). They will need to provide their social security number, date of birth, place of employment and two phone numbers. Each person listed on the lease will be included on the account and will need to provide proper identification, as identified above.

At the time of service application, new customers must pay a deposit of \$150 that will be refunded without interest after two years if service has not been delinquent during that period.

Customers who would qualify for the City of Liberty Utility Bill Credit program will be required to pay a \$75 deposit at time of service application.

Same day service can be provided if the customer pays in person or calls to set up service before noon.

Primary Forms of Identification - The City of Liberty accepts any of the following as forms of identification at the time of application for service. A valid driver's license, military id, social security card, U.S. passport, birth certificate, permanent resident card, alien registration receipt card, or an unexpired foreign passport with an unexpired arrival-departure record.

Methods of Payment - Payments can be mail to City of Liberty, PO Box 801737, Kansas City MO 64180 or be paid in person at Liberty City Hall, 101 E. Kansas Street.

A utility drop box is located across from the Police Department on Missouri St. or at the City of Liberty Community Center. Payments are collected at 8:00 a.m. on weekdays. **Payments placed in the drop box after 8:00 a.m. will be credited to the customer's account on the next business day.**

Customers can set up an online account from the City's website at www.ci.liberty.mo.us which will allow them to view records and pay their bill with a debit or credit card.

Customers can also sign up to have their monthly utility bill automatically deducted from a bank account on the day that the bill is due. A completed enrollment form, which is available online, should be mailed or dropped off with a voided check.

Credit card payments will not be taken over the phone by billing staff.

Billing Cycles - Utility bills are split into two billing cycles. They are mailed monthly and due each month. **Failure to receive a utility bill does not relieve the customer's obligation to pay the utility bill when due.** Customers can review their account information on line and/or call the City of Liberty Utility Division to determine the amount due.

Cycle 1 accounts are distinguished by an account number beginning with a 1 (i.e. 109.9999.99.99). These bills are mailed on or about the 25th of the month and are due on the 20th of the following month.

Cycle 2 accounts are distinguished by an account number beginning with a 2 (i.e. 209.9999.99.99). These bills are mailed on or about the 10th of each month and are due the 5th of the following month.

Late Bills - If bills are not paid by the due date, a 10% penalty will be applied to the current water and wastewater charges and a delinquent notice is sent to the customer.

Disconnection For Non-payment - Utility service will be disconnected if a delinquent bill is not paid by the due date shown on the delinquent notice. When utility service has been disconnected for bill non-payment, the full amount of the past due balance plus a reconnection fee of \$25.00 must be paid before service will be reinstated.

No service reconnections will occur after 4 p.m. Customers who experience a water disconnection are expected to shut off all faucets prior to water reconnection or have someone at their place of service at the time of reconnection. Meter technicians will not reconnect service and leave water on if the customer's meter indicates that water is flowing through the meter.

Any customer who has been disconnected, but has not already paid a \$150 deposit, will be required to pay a total deposit of \$150 prior to reconnection. Customers who have a deposit on file that is not equal to \$150 will be required to pay the difference to bring the deposit amount up to \$150. This is in addition to the payment for the past due amount and \$25 reconnect fee. **Cash, money orders, credit or debit cards will be the only form of payment accepted after service has been disconnected.**

Payment Arrangements - Payment arrangements on delinquent accounts may be made one time per calendar year. Customers seeking a payment arrangement are required to sign a Promise to Pay Agreement in person. The agreement will extend the customer's payment due date two weeks from the delinquent payment due date, at which time the **past due and current charges must be paid.**

Payment arrangements cannot be made for a customer whose water has already been shut off for non-payment of their utility bill. Customers desiring to learn more about payment arrangements should call the utility office at 816-439-4460.

Customers failing to adhere to the conditions of their payment agreement will not be provided any future opportunities to enter into future payment agreements.

Agency Assistance - The following agencies may be able to assist customers who are experiencing difficulty in paying utility bills:

Love Inc. – 816-781-3200 -- Hillcrest Ministries – 816-781-8988 -- Salvation Army – 816-452-5663
Northland Assistance Center – 816-421-2243

Customers can also call United Way (816-474-5112) for additional agency referrals. Assistance from these agencies is at the discretion of each agency.

Returned Checks - Customers with checks returned to the City for non-sufficient funds, stop pays, closed accounts or any other reasons will receive a posted notice at their place of residence/business informing them of the returned check. The notice will inform the customer that the City has received a returned check and that the customer has **three business days** to make payment on the check or their water service will be disconnected. Service that is disconnected due to a returned check will be subject to disconnect fees and charges. The customer will also be charged a \$10 service charge for a returned check. **Cash, money orders, credit or debit cards will be the only form of payment accepted. Customers with three returned checks will not be allowed to pay their utility bill via check payments. Such customers will be required to pay their utility bills with cash, money orders, credit or debit cards.**

Changes in Occupancy - Customers must notify the utility office to disconnect service and to close their utility account. The customer is held responsible for the water/wastewater charges at the premises until such notice is given. A forwarding address will be required at this time so the customer's deposit or overpayment refund can be sent to them.

Tampering With Meter - A customer who has utility service disconnected for non-payment is not allowed to reconnect the water service and cannot have anyone other than a City service technician reconnect the water service. If so, a **\$25** penalty will be imposed and **the customer will be faced with the possibility that legal charges may be filed and be subject to civil fines up to \$500.**

Domestic (Residential) Winter Water Average – Wastewater Charges - The City of Liberty bases monthly wastewater charges for domestic users on a common industry standard known as Winter Water Average. Winter Water Average attempts to negate water usage that is associated with Spring, Summer and Fall activities (i.e. watering lawns, filling swimming pools, etc.) by focusing on water usage during the winter months in order to determine appropriate wastewater charges. The user rates applied to these volumes are established annually by the City Council.

The wastewater service charge for new customers shall be determined by applying the wastewater service charge to the current month's water consumption and will continue to be the basis of wastewater service charges until the customer has established a Winter Water Average. New customers that find their individual water usage during the summer months (consumption used for lawn watering, filling swimming pools and such) do not provide an accurate reading of wastewater volumes, should call the utility billing office to discuss the possible benefits of having their wastewater charges figured on a **city-wide winter water average basis**. If this option is more appropriate, any cost adjustments provided will only impact their current bill and all future bills rendered before the customer establishes a Winter Water Average. **The City will not credit prior months.** Customers may call the office at 816-439-4460 to inquire about this option.

Customers who have an established Winter Water Average can opt out of wastewater charges that are based on a Winter Water Average by contacting the City to formally indicate their desire to be charged on actual water usage for the months of December, January, February and March. Once notified, the City will remove the Winter Water Average from the customer's account and start billing the customer on actual water usage. **Customers can only use this option once during a twelve month period.** The selection made will establish the billing basis until April of the next year. Any cost adjustments provided will only impact the current bill and any future bills until the customer's new Winter Water Average is calculated. The City will not credit prior months. Said opt out notice must be made annually. Failure to make the request will result in a default back to bills based on the last Winter Water Average on file. You may call the office at 816-439-4460 to inquire about this option.

Utility Bill Credits - Water customers are responsible for all water usage that goes through the water meter on the customer side of the water line. Water usage due to customer leaks and/or line breaks represent valid customer usage. Such charges cannot be forgiven or credited.

There are times that, due to customer water leaks, improper plumbing connections, incomplete plumbing connections, and/or a failure to adequately maintain water systems, Commercial customers may use water volumes that they believe should not be subject to wastewater charges. It is the customer's responsibility to maintain their systems and ensure proper and complete plumbing of their water systems. The City will not reduce wastewater charges and/or provide for prior period billing credits in these cases.

Utility Bill Credit Program - An income-based water/sewer utility bill credit program is offered for qualified senior citizens and 100% disabled individuals. This program provides a 15% reduction in water and sewer rates to qualified residents. To qualify, you must participate in the State of Missouri property tax/rent rebate program for seniors and disabled individuals and submit the application form each year.

Solid Waste Credit Program - The City of Liberty offers a solid waste reduction program for all residents over 65 years of age on the primary residence. Customers will provide proof of age and the utility bill must be in the customer's name at the time of application.